

## The Curse of the Nations.

Oh the folly of trying to restrain an evil by Government tariff! If every gallon of whiskey made, if every flask of wine produced, should be taxed a thousand dollars, it would not be enough to pay for the tears it has wrung from the eyes of widows and orphans, nor for the blood it has dashed on the Christian church, nor for the catastrophe of the millions it has destroyed for ever.

**A**  
**Comparison.**  
I sketch two houses in this street. The first is bright as home can be. The father comes at nightfall, and the children run out to meet him. Luxuriant evening meal. Gratulation, and sympathy and laughter. Music in the parlor. Fine pictures on the wall. Costly books on the stand. Well-clad household. Plenty of everything to make home happy.

House the second: Piano sold yesterday by the sheriff. Wife's furs at pawn-broker's shop. Clock gone. Daughter's jewelry sold to get flour. Carpets gone off the floor. Daughters in faded and patched dresses. Wife sewing for the stores. Little child with an ugly wound on her face, made by an angry blow. Deep shadow of wretchedness falling in every room. Door-bell rings. Little children hide. Daughters turn pale. Wife holds her breath. Blundering step in the hall. Door opens. Fiend, brandishing his fist, cries, "Out! out! What are you doing here?"

Did I call this house the second? No; it is the same house. Rum transformed it. Rum emoruted the man. Rum sold the shawl. Rum tore up the carpets. Rum shook his fist. Rum desolated the hearth. RUM changed that paradise into a hell.

**A**  
**Fearful Passion.**  
I do not care how much a man loves his wife and children, if this passion for strong drink has mastered him, he will do the most outrageous things; and if he could not get drink in any other way, he would sell his family into eternal bondage. How many homes have been broken up that way no one but God knows. Oh, is there anything that will so destroy a man for this life and damn him for the life that is to come? I hate that strong drink. With all the concentrated energies of my soul I hate it. Why, there are on the roads

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and streets of this land to-day little children barefooted, uncombed and unkempt—want on every patch of their faded dresses and on every wrinkle of their prematurely old countenances—who would have been in churches to-day and as well clad as you are but for the fact that rum destroyed their parents and drove them into the grave. Oh, Rum, thou foe of God, thou despoiler of homes, thou recruiting officer of the pit, I hate thee!

**The Drunkard's Will.**  
I call attention to the fact that there are thousands of people born with a thirst for strong drink—a fact too often ignored. Along some ancestral lines there runs the river of temptation. There are some children whose swaddling clothes are torn off the shroud of death.

Many a father has made a will of this sort: "In the name of God, amen. I bequeath to my children my houses and lands and estates; share and share shall they alike. Hereto I affix my hand and seal in the presence of witnesses." And yet perhaps that very man has made another will that the people have never read, and that has not been proved in the courts. That will, put in writing, would read something like this: "In the name of disease and appetite and death, amen. I bequeath to my children my evil habits, my tankards shall be theirs, my wine cups shall be theirs, my destroyed reputation shall be theirs. Share and share alike shall they in the infamy. Hereto I affix my hand and seal in the presence of all the applauding harpies of hell."

**Longing For Relief.**  
Oh! how many are waiting to see if something cannot be done. Thousands of drunkards waiting, who cannot go ten minutes in any direction without having the temptation glaring before their eyes or appealing to their nostrils, they fighting against it with enfeebled will and diseased appetite, conquering, then surrendering, conquering again, and surrendering again, and crying: "How long, O Lord! how long before these infamous solicitations shall be gone?"

**A Weary Wait.**  
How many mothers there are waiting to see if this national curse cannot lift! Oh! is that the boy that had the honest breath who comes home with breath vitiated or disguised? What a change! How quickly those habits of early coming home had been exchanged for the rattling of the night-key in the door long after the last watch-

man has gone by and tried to see that everything was closed up for the night. Oh! what a change for that young man who we had hoped would do something in merchandise, or in artisanship, or in a profession that would do honor to the family name long after mother's wrinkled hands are folded from the last toil! All that exchanged for a startled look when the door bell rings, lest something has happened; and the wish that the scarlet fever twenty years ago had been fatal, for then he would have gone directly to the bosom of his Saviour. But, alas! poor old soul, she has lived to experience what Solomon said: "A foolish son is a heaviness to his mother."

**Broken****Hearted.**

Oh! what a funeral it will be when that boy is brought home dead. And how that mother will sit there and say, "Is this my boy that I used to fondle and that I used to walk the floor with in the night when he was sick? Is this the boy that I held to the baptismal font for baptism? Is this the boy for whom I toiled until the blood burst from the tips of my fingers, that he might have a good start and a good home? Lord, why hast Thou let me live to see this? Can it be that these swollen hands are the ones that used to wander over my face when rocking him to sleep? Can it be that this is the baby forehead that I once so rapturously kissed? Poor boy! how tired he does look. I wonder who struck him that blow across the temple. I wonder if he uttered a dying prayer. Wake up my son; don't you hear me? Wake up! Oh! he can't hear me. Dead, dead, dead! 'O Absalom, my son, would God that I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'"

I am not much of a mathematician, and I cannot estimate it; but is there any one here quick enough at figures to estimate how many mothers there are waiting for something to be done?

**A****Drunken Husband.**

Ay, there are many wives waiting for domestic rescue. That man promised something different from this when, after the long acquaintance and careful scrutiny of character, the hand and the heart were offered and accepted. What a hell on earth a woman lives in who has a drunken husband. O Death, how lovely thou art to her, and how warm thy skeleton hand! The sepulchre at midnight in winter is a king's drawing-room compared with that woman's home.

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It is not so much the blow on the head that hurts as the blow on the heart. The rum fiend came to that beautiful home, and opened the door and stood there, and said: "I curse this dwelling with an unrelenting curse. I curse that father into a maniac. I curse that mother into a pauper. I curse those sons into vagabonds. I curse those daughters into profligacy. Cursed be bread tray and cradle. Cursed be couch and chair, and family Bible with record of marriages and births and deaths. Curse upon curse." Oh! how many wives are there waiting to see if something cannot be done to shake these frosts of the second death off the orange blossoms!

**God is Waiting.**

He did Phoenicia, as He did Rome, as He did Thebes, and as He did Babylon.

**No****Compromise.**

The hardest blow the temperance reformation has had in this century has been the fact that some reformers have halted under the delusion of the high-license movement. You know what it is. It is the white flag of truce sent out from Alcoholism to Prohibition, to make the battle pause long enough to get the army of decanters and demijohns better organized. Away with that flag of truce, or I will fire on it. Between these two armies there can be no truce.

On the one side are God and sobriety and the best interests of the world, and on the other side is the sworn enemy of all righteousness, and either rum must be defeated or the Church of God and civilization. What are you trying to compromise with? Oh, this black, destroying archangel of all diabolism, putting one wing to the Pacific, putting the other wing to the Atlantic coast, its filthy claws clutching into the torn and bleeding heart-strings of the nation that cries out: "How long, O Lord, how long!" Compromise with it! You had better compromise with the panther in his jungle, with the cyclone in its flight, with an Egyptian plague as it blotches an empire, with Apollyon, for whom this evil is recruiting officer, quartermaster, and commander-in-chief.

Oh, my friends, let us fight this battle out on the old line, for victory is coming as surely as right is right, and wrong is wrong, and falsehood is false, and truth is truth, and God is God.—*Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*